

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 15, 17, 19, and 25-34 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 15, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iami et al (U.S. 5,975,772) in view of Imai (U.S. 6,023,283) and Arai et al. (U.S. 6,215,103). Claim 25 is stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iami et al ('772) in view of Imai ('283), Arai et al. ('103) and Donaldson et al. (U.S. 6,114,660). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

(1) In the dry gray-scale image processor of claims 1 and 26 of the above-referenced application, a film supply cassette in which unexposed films are stored and a film collection tray in which exposed films are stored are provided on opposite sides of two ends of an U-shaped carrying path, and the processes of exposure and heating are performed on a curved bottom face of the U-shaped carrying path. Therefore, the carrying path is made as short as possible and the number of carrying rollers can be decreased, and as a result, the image processor can more easily be made small and light, and the number of components can be reduced.

Furthermore, in the dry gray-scale image processor of claim 25 of the above-referenced application, a cooling region which is provided at an exit of the heating unit, and flatness regain rollers are provided after the cooling region. This makes it possible to prevent warping of the film due to heating. Moreover, the cooling region is a space which

has a predetermined length along a carrying direction of the exposed film as shown in Fig. 1.

In addition, in the dry gray-scale image processor of claims 33 and 34 of the above-referenced application, temperature distribution of a heating unit along the width of the film is kept constant by adjusting the intensity of a heater element of the heating unit in such a manner that the intensity of the heater element in the center along the width of the film is higher than two ends. The intensity of the heater element is adjusted by changing the number of windings of the heater element around an axis of the heating unit.

(2) In contrast, four citations cited by the Examiner in the Office Action do not disclose the above features of the above claims.

No member corresponding to the U-shaped carrying path of claims 1 and 26 of the above-referenced application is disclosed in the citations 2 and 3 (U. S. Patent Nos. 6,023,283 and 6,215,103). Furthermore, in the citations 1 and 4 (U.S. Patent Nos. 5,975,772 and 6,114,660), an exposure unit is provided at a lower end of the image processor and the heating unit is provided at an upper end of the image processor, and the film supply cassette and the film collection tray are positioned between the exposure unit and the heating unit.

In addition, no member corresponding to the cooling region of claim 25 of the above-referenced application is disclosed in the citations 1 through 3. Furthermore, the cooling unit of the citation 4 has no space as the cooling region before cooling rollers.

Moreover, there are no features corresponding to those of claims 33 and 34 of the above-referenced application in the citations 1 through 4, since no member for equalizing

the temperature distribution of the heating unit along the width of the film is disclosed in the citations 1 through 4.

(3) As explained above, the above two citations do not teach the significant features of the present invention as claimed, which have direct bearing on the advantages of the above-referenced application. Therefore, the present invention as claimed is not obvious from the citations.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: Gregory Stobbs
Gregory A. Stobbs
Reg. No. 28,764

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600